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ABSTRACT

A study was made of the ways in which norms of distributive justice constructed within families depend on types of family interaction and on the socioeconomic position of spouses. Data were obtained via a scenario technique enabling observation of the way in which 107 Swiss families resolved 5 typical problems of equity: parents' retirement, selling a jointly held property at a special price, allocation of adolescent family members' earnings, caring for a live-in grandfather, and deciding grandchildren's inheritance. Discussion first describes the way in which integration and adaptation typologies of family interaction were constructed and their relationship with the socioeconomic status of the families. Attention is then given to the relationship between the typologies and the decision-making process concerning distributive justice. Principal results are discussed in terms of (1) choice of principles and evaluation criteria, (2) procedural justice versus material justice, (3) norms of comparison, (4) the nature of interactants' resources, and (5) forms of appropriation. It is concluded that the saliency of the need for justice is clearer in "professional" and autonomous families than in "lower middle class" families and fusional families. Findings also indicate that judgments of the equitable or inequitable nature of a situation are guided by two "regulators," not one. (RH)

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SOCIAL STRATIFICATION, TYPES OF FAMILY INTERACTION AND DISTRIBUTIVE JUSTICE

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1. Introduction

In this paper we try to define the ways in which norms of distributive justice constructed within families depend on types of family interaction and on the socioeconomic position of the spouses.

In the past twenty years the debate surrounding justice or injustice in family exchanges has been lively. Themes such as the double work day of the married woman, respective patrimony rights of spouses and children, financial compensation for housework, comparative social mobility of husbands and wives, among others, have animated public opinion and researchers (cf. Allan, 1985, p.78-99; Perrin, 1985; Scanzoni, 1983), and they all give rise to judgements of equity. The dialectic of giving and of calculation and accumulation in family exchanges has long been a theme in sociology (cf. Murdock, 1949), but has been reactivated since in contemporary Europe the multiplication of family separations and of stepfamilies, the progressive generalization of double careers, and the privatization of exchange modes raise the question of "who deserves what" in a very concrete manner. As demands for justice are becoming more radical, in the family as elsewhere, the family is probably the institution in which are confronted the most contradictory conceptions of equity. Three modes of legitimation of fairness are in overt or disguised competition here: Merit, Status, and Need (Leventhal, 1980; Mikula, 1980) seem to be three radically different ways of articulating the relationship between the contributions of, and the retributions to, group members, but broad social legitimacy can nevertheless be found for each. Thus, as a sequel to noted ethnological works (Mauss, 1968; Sahlins, 1979), the desire to examine whether the definition of justice is determined by the general forms of exchange in the group and by its relations with the outside environment. Rather than to postulate a unique and vague universal sentiment of justice endowed with constant comportmental implications, it seems to us to be essential to define the variations in concrete forms of the need for justice by type of interaction within the group and by its place in the social hierarchy.

This endeavour is all the more legitimate that in the last fifteen years studies of distributive justice have multiplied in general sociology and in social psychology (cf. Greenberg and Cohen, 1982; Messick and Cook, 1983 for syntheses), furnishing a body of hypotheses interesting to test. However these studies have most often been done in laboratories, and research on real groups, with some notable exceptions (Tallmann, 1979), are much too rare. The observation of families can in part remedy this lack.

This being said, how can we define the problem more specifically? The state of distributive justice is generally characterized (Walster, 1975, p. 21) by the equaltiy of the ratio between the contributions and the retributions of diverse persons (equaltiy of treatment). This definition implies that, when they must render a "judgement of justice", social actors make four choices which form the structure of the decision-making process: a) they establish principles and utilizable criteria for evaluating the inputs of each, and for comparison when inputs are of different natures (= allocation rules); b) they define the persons who must be compared and the specific rules to be employed for the comparison (= comparison rules); c) they classify scarce resources into diverse categories, and possibly modify allocation rules by going from one to another; d) they define the conditions under which a "resource" can be considered as individual property or not; in other words they decide the respective sovereignty of ego, alter, and the group over scarce resources.

The intervention of these four normative referentials assures that the decision of justice is not an axiologically neuter automatism, but rather a strategy of definition of the situation which privileges, consciously or not, certain aspects of the functioning of the group: cohesion or efficiency, adaptability or consensus, conservation of cleavages or their negation, instrumentality or expressivity, etc. It is thus sociologically fundamental to specify the relation existing between the choice of normative referentials and the nature of the interactions in the group.

In essence, the four choices just evoked are concretized in the following alternatives:
- choosing between an internal or an external (to the group) criterium for the evaluation of the inputs of group members, this choice itself implying the use of a principle of legitimization (=principle of justice);
- choosing between an individual or a categorial criterium for comparison of actors;
- choosing between the modification or the conservation of these allocation and comparison rules as a function of the types of resources exchanged;
- choosing the priority of the individual or of the group for defining property rights over resources.

A fifth option, which goes beyond the conceptual framework adopted until now, should be added to the four above. Groups do not make one justice decision, but two. The justice decision discussed above concerns the judgment of equity relative to the result of the allocation. A second judgment of justice concerns the legitimacy of the process followed by the actors in making the allocation: have the decision-makers consulted the right people, followed legitimate phases, etc. This is thus formal or procedural justice. These two judgments sometimes lead to contradictory appreciations: unfair but formally just allocations are not rare. Thus it is important to know which groups accord a certain primacy to procedural justice, and which decide what is fair on the basis of the results.

We will pay particular attention to how these choices depend both on the level of the resources of the group (i.e. its

socioeconomic position), and on the nature of family interactions.

We have observed the way in which 107 Swiss families resolve five typical problems of equity, defined below, and we will link their responses to a typology of interactions obtained on the basis of an interactive test of self-definition of the family group (Kellerhals et al., 1986). This test was developed in order to define the way (both the process and the result) in which spouses, in interaction, draw the portrait of their own family. It measures both the axes or criteria that members employ for defining their family and the positions they occupy on these axes. The families observed live in Geneva, and have been married for approximately 10 years. They were interviewed in their homes at three intervals. A sub-sample of "lower middle class" families (workers and subordinate employees) is contrasted with a sub-sample of "professional" families (middle and upper level employees and professionals). These sub-samples will be specified in the presentation of the results whenever appropriate. The "contrasted samples" procedure does not permit us to present proportions relative to the whole of the Geneva population, but does permit simple characterization of styles of justice peculiar to each social level and type of family interaction distinguished here.

We will first briefly describe the way in which typologies of family interaction were constructed, and their relationship with the socioeconomic status of the families. We will then return to the relation existing between these typologies and the decision-making process concerning distributive justice.

2. Socioeconomic status and types of interaction

The self-definition test (called "who are we") goes as follows: 1) Husband and wife are asked to draw a portrait of their family by stating a limited number - 8 per family - of slogans or leit-motivs which seem to them a) characteristic of their style of life, and b) crucial for the proper functioning of the group. 2) Each spouse takes turns freely proposing such a slogan (for example: "In our family each person has his own room", or "In our family we try to live as Christians" or "In our family it is important that the children be in bed before ten o'clock"). 3) The other must then give an opinion as to a) the veracity, and b) the importance of the proposed trait. The couple is of course permitted to negotiate a formulation which seems acceptable to both members. 4) The trait is retained by the observer when these two conditions (veracity and importance) are united.

We thus obtain approximately 800 traits which serve as the basis for content analysis. The latter shows (Kellerhals and Troutot, 1986) that three axes or dimensions are systematically employed by all of the families in drawing their self-portraits: group cohesion, integration with the outside world, and regulation. Other dimensions, for example the priority accorded one or another of the above dimensions, appear in only some of the family portraits. We can thus retain the three "general" dimensions for formulating a typology of group consciousness.

Each of these dimensions has two poles. Cohesion style can be characterized by insistance on similarity, consensus, fusion of the diverse members of the family, or on the contrary by the underlining of their specificity, their difference, their autonomy. Integration with the outside world can be characterized by being closed (avoidance of contacts with the outside and of external information, little investment in non-domestic activities), or on the contrary by being open (wide use of external information and of contacts with friends, family etc. for internal exchanges). Regulation can be normative when family members insist on formulating precise general rules of functioning (meals at fixed times, specific division of tasks, discipline of children etc.) or on the contrary communicative when they insist on negotiation of the meaning of the situation, on communication, on the construction of a specific response depending on the circumstances.

We note that these three variables, spontaneously employed by all the families in defining their group, correspond on the whole with those used both by Reiss (1981) and by Olson (1983) in elaborating their family types. We have thus constructed two typologies on this basis: the first, which we call Integration, crosses cohesion and integration. The second, Adaptation, crosses cohesion and regulation. We obtain the following types:

Integration typology

- "Bastion" families: cohesion by fusion and being closed to the outside
- "Refuge" families: cohesion by fusion and openness to the outside
- "Autonomous" families: cohesion by autonomy and openness to the outside

The fourth type (autonomy and closed to the outside) was not found.

Adaptation typology

- "Traditional" families: cohesion by fusion and normative regulation
- "Companionship" families: cohesion by fusion and communicative regulation
- "Negotiation" families: cohesion by autonomy and communicative regulation

The fourth type (autonomy and normative regulation) was not found.

We now turn to the correlation between the socioeconomic status of the family and the type of interaction described in the self-portraits.*

*NOTE: Reference numbers ("RN") below refer to data given in annex. The numbers used for calculations of percentages are given, and the note "RN" refers to figures presented under the corresponding number. (Example: RN 1 refers to proportions based on the numbers given under 1 in the annex.)

The place families occupy in the Integration typology is largely dependent on their position in the social structure, as defined by the socioprofessional status of the spouses or by the revenue of the household. 45% of the "lower middle class" families (families of workers and subordinate employees) fall into the "Bastion" category, characterized by fusion and by being closed to the outside environment. This proportion is only 17% in "professional" families (families of middle and upper level employees and of professionals). Reciprocally, 18% of the "lower middle class" families are of the "Autonomous" type (autonomy, openness), whereas 37% of the "professional" families are of this type (RN 1). When household revenue is taken into consideration, these positions are even more contrasted. Only 8% of the high revenue families (>7000 Sfrs/mo.) are of the "Bastion" type (fusion and closedness), whereas this proportion is 56% among low revenue families (<5500 Sfrs/mo.) (RN 2).

Similar divergences are noted, understandably, in the Adaptation typology. In "lower middle class" families we find 50% of the "Traditional" type (fusion and normative regulation). This proportion drops to 19% in "professional" families. Reciprocally, 45% of the "professional" famiies are of the "Negotiation" type (autonomy and communication), as opposed to 18% of the "lower middle class" families (RN 1). The differences obtained as a function of revenue are equally evident: 56% of the low revenue households are of the "Traditional" type, as opposed to only 12% of the high revenue households (RN 2).

We now come to the relationship between types of family interaction and the decision-making process concerning distributive justice.

3. Types of interaction and distributive justice

In order to analyse the decision-making process concerning distributive justice we have chosen the scenario technique. The procedure consists of: 1) confronting the spouses with a problem of distributive justice to be solved, 2) interactively, 3) in several phases, 4) while an observer notes the way in which the actors construct the solution. The scenario strategy is ideally applicable to a process of collective decision-making decomposable into a limited number of generic problems to which it can be referred. By generic problem we mean the main bifurcations figuring in the decision trajectory of the actors. These bifurcations having been identified by the researcher, the idea is to construct an extremely refined situation in order to controle or eliminate a maximum of parasite elements. The scenario technique thus requires the construction of an ideal-type of the process analysed. It is the very concrete expression of this ideal-type.

In the area studied here, we can of course identify whether the actors choose to link or not to link merit and rewards, whether they select a categorial or an individual principle of comparison, whether the method of allocation is permanent or varies depending on the resource in question, etc. Whatever, in effect, the concrete situation of the actors, whatever their style of daily life, they are and will be confronted with such dilemmas, and the sum of these dilemmas reflects fairly

well the social process of justice decisions.

We now briefly describe the scenarios and indicate the generic problems to which they refer.

Scenario 1: "Parents retirement": The problem posed is that of deciding how to finance the "retirement" of the spouses' parents. The parents do not have a sufficient pension; 1000 francs per month must be found. Who should be asked to contribute, and in what proportion? Husband and wife have already drawn their family trees with the observer, and these are in front of them. In phase 1 each notes in secret how much he or she would ask, and of whom, if the problem concerned his or her own parents. In phase 2 they do the same for the spouse's parents. In phase 3 they compare their responses and come to a common conclusion for each of the two sets of parents. It is made clear that the couple must decide in taking into account their real brothers and sisters, uncles, etc., and not in the abstract.

The aim of this scenario is to observe the rules of comparison and criteria of evaluation between actors belonging to several categories (in this case categories of family relationship); the aim is also to define the degree of conservation or of variation in these rules according to categories, and also to measure the degree of initial consensus.

Scenario 2: "Special price": Husband and wife have conjointly inherited a house which had belonged to the wife's grandparents. It is clearly specified that a) both members of the couple inherit equally, and b) a cousin of the wife also inherits. The house is full of remembrances for the wife's family. Since not everybody can live in it, it must be sold, and it is presumed that the various brothers and sisters of both spouses are interested in buying it, but would not be able to afford it at the market price. The question is whether they would agree to a special price (implying a loss of 80,000 francs), and if so, for whom. In phase 1 they respond secretly. In phase 2 they compare their responses, negotiating which would be the solutions on which they could agree, and define a beneficiary who would have priority.

The objective of the scenario is to know whether or not there is a link between the nature of the resource (material and symbolic for the wife's family, and material only for the husband's) and the rules of comparison.

Scenario 3: "Little Bouquets": The two (presumed) daughters of the couple, twins 14 years old, have agreed to make little bouquets of artificial flowers to be sold for marriages, first communions etc., for the florist for whom one of the spouses works. They do this in order to earn pocket money, and the florist pays one franc per bouquet. The twins each work three days at home, with equal assiduousness. But one is more skillful than the other and makes 400 bouquets, while her sister makes only 200. The florist gives the 600 francs to the parents. The problem is to how the subjects will distribute this sum. In phase 1 each spouse chooses a solution secretly. In phase 2 they compare and negotiate a common solution.

The main purpose of this scenario is of course to define the strategies of choice between contradictory principles of equity and to distinguish - for each of these strategies - the prevalence of internal or of external criteria of evaluation.

Scenario 4: "Grandfather": The wife's father, an elderly widower, is ill and can no longer live alone. He is to live for six months to a year in an apartment above that of the couple while waiting for a place in a retirement home. In order for him to have a decent life, he needs someone to attend to his administrative affairs (pension, taxes, savings etc.), keep him company at regular intervals, help him wash and dress each morning, go for a walk with him three times a week and accompany him on visits to his friends, and do his housework (including washing and ironing). In phase 1 each notes who (he or she) should do each of the tasks mentioned. In phase 2 these are compared and a common solution is requested. The observer asks the criteria by which a task is attributed to husband or wife. In phase 3 each of the spouses must say whether or not the final distribution obtained seems equitable. In phase 4 the problem is reversed: what changes would be made if the problem concerned the husband's father?

The objective of this scenario is to examine if and how the criteria of justice change in function of the nature of the resources (in this case the effort) to be furnished. The objective is also to define - by examining the lateralization (wife's or husband's father) - the degree of conservation in the decision-making process.

Scenario 5: "Inheritance": The father of one of the spouses consults his children (the couple observed) about making his will. He wishes to bequeath to his two grandsons (the children of the couple), but hesitates about the best way to do this. In fact the grandsons, young adults, are in very different social positions: one is a draughtsman, the other a dentist. The second is thus financially wealthier. Should this difference be taken into account in the repartition of the inheritance? It is clear that the opinion of the parents will be decisive. In phase 1 the spouses choose a solution together. In phase 2 the observer states that the children, who have been informed, have discussed the matter between them and have arrived at a different solution (in fact the inverse of that chosen by the parents). Should the parents' solution be maintained, or is it preferable to accept the solution elaborated, of common accord, by the children?

The objective of this scenario is to define the hierarchy of procedural justice as opposed to material justice and to capture the variations in the principle of justice as a function of the nature of the resource (in comparison with "Little Bouquets".)

Interested readers will find a more complete description of these scenarios in Kellerhals et al. (1986).

We now come to a discussion of the principal results.

4. Choice of principles and evaluation criteria

In considering distributive justice, allocating limited resources to actors who are in principle of unequal merit, the problem of evaluation is essentially to choose a principle of justice (characterized mainly by the coupling or not of contributions and of retributions), and to choose criteria for evaluating the position of each actor in each case. How do people decide? We use the "Little Bouquets" scenario to examine this double question of principles and of criteria.

4.1 An approach to justice principles: types of argument used

In the "Little Bouquets" scenario the spouses use three qualitatively different types of argument for choosing the sum due to each of the daughters:

a) Evaluation consists of measuring per se the value of the services rendered by the actors, using a criterium recognized as universally valid. The value of the service is judged, depending on the case, by the time invested, the market value, the emotional charge, the effort etc. The task of the decision-maker is thus to define a criterium he or she considers fair independently of the context, an invariant. This strategy of evaluation is often presented in laboratary studies as the only way to establish justice. But we encounter two additional strategies as follows:

b) Assimilation consists of defining the context, (or more specifically the "relations of production") in which the service is rendered, and of applying (whether or not it is judged fair) the allocation rule usually prevailing in that relation of production (enterprise, team, family, etc.). If the relation of production selected is "work", one must pay according to what has been produced, if it is a "team" one must pay equally, etc. Attention is thus displaced from the evaluation of the product (which has no value in itself) to the definition of the context. Coherence is sought.

c) Finalization consists of anticipating the consequences of a given repartition on the dynamic of the group or on the future of the individual (or on any other instance of reference) and of choosing the repartition which seems most likely to bring the desired results. The decision of equity goes beyond the limited terrain of analysis of merits, debts and needs, to englobe the diachrony of the group or of the individual and become instrumental for its development.

It seems reasonable to think that these three types of argument reflect three principles of justice. Evaluation implies the idea of merit. In this case a given repartition is judged universally fair (or unfair) as a function of the services rendered by the actors, by a definition of their merits. What must be defined is the criteria of merit: effort, results, etc. (cf. below). Assimilation implies, on the contrary, questions of appurtenance. The accent here is on the type of "contract" (voluntary or not) in which the parties are engaged, on the kind of "society" they form. The justice act consists of defining the valid contract (or the appurtenance to be given priority), then of allocating in consequence. Saying what is right amounts to defining the game. There is no "fair in

and of itself", but contexts (factory, family, team, etc.) which have different rules of repartition. Finalization, a vectorial strategy which defines a "state of justice" as positive consequences to the individual or to the group, whatever the contracts and the services rendered, implies an idea of fairness founded on the satisfaction of need. It is sufficient to recognize that individuals are not alone in having needs, but that the group as such also has needs.

A first basic result of the "Little Bouquets" scenario is thus to demonstrate that families express, implicitely, via the types of argumentation they use, the existence of several principles of justice rather than just one. Even though each of these justice principles can theoretically occur in each group, they are not equally pertinent, or equally central across the diverse types of group interaction. This is demonstrated when the dominant argumentation of each of the actors in the "Little Bouquets" scenario is classified into one of the three categories (cf. Kellerhals et al, 1986, pp. 105 ss. for modalities and examples of classification). We consider the arguments of women and those of men separately, starting with those of women.

In "autonomous" families (in which cohesion by specificity and openness to the environment predominates) argumentation by "assimilation" is more frequent than in other types of family. "Fair", as defined by accord among the parties, or in conformity with a rule prevalent in a given "society", occupies a clearer place than in the other groups. 40% of the womens' arguments in these families are predominantly "assimilative", as opposed to only 18% in the group of fusional families (RN 3).

On the other hand, finalization types of argument (based on need) are more pronounced (34%) in open fusional families than in autonomous families (6%). Women in closed fusional families use slightly more evaluative arguments (principle of merit, search for an invariant) than do the others (63% vs. 51%). The same types of difference appear in the Adaptation typology. Women in fusional communicational families use finalistic arguments (based on need) more often than do those in autonomous families (32% vs. 6%), and those in normative fusional families use evaluative arguments more often than do those in communicational families (70% vs. 44%) (RN 4).

Thus we can detect different preferences as to principles of justice among women, depending on types of cohesion or of family adaptation. These tendencies, however, do not appear among men. Masculine attitudes as to principles of justice do not vary as a function of family type. Is this because professional frames of reference dominate family frames of reference in men? We do not have an easy explanation for this finding.

As for differences by socioeconomic status, "professional" class women adopt assimilative arguments more often than do "lower middle class" women (34% vs. 18%)(RN 1). More often than elsewhere, on the upper levels of the social scale defining what is just amounts to defining "the game" that is being played, rather than finding an invariant. But once again this correlation is not found among men.

The potential conflict between these three principles of justice

raises the question of the complexity of the decision-making process. Complexity, measured by successive and concurrential use of several types of argument, also varies according to type of family. Trying out different ways of establishing fairness is comparatively more frequent in the families in which interaction with the outside is valued and the respective independence of family members recognized, the autonomous-communicational families. In these families the respondants try, and compare, several principles for the same decision: the solution is not evident. On the other hand, fusional-normative families find an immediate solution more frequently: 47% of the women in autonomous families employ different types of arguments before arriving at a decision, whereas only 25% of the women in normative families do so (RN 4). The process is thus simpler for these women. But, as we shall see below, simplicity is not necessarily synonymous with satisfaction.

4.2 Internal or external criteria

Whatever the principle of justice to which they refer, decision-makers must eventually choose between internal or external criteria of measure of the "positions" of the actors. Internal criteria make sense by and for the group, but are not necessarily in use in the society outside the group. External criteria are those used in general society outside the group. In the "Little Bouquets" scenario the preference for internal criteria can more or less be assumed when respondants choose an egalitarian solution. Where, thus, is the use of internal criteria the most marked? To determine this, we use the common decision negotiated in "Little Bouquets", first noting that individual choices of the decision-makers were frequently in disaccord: half of the families observed initially disagreed on the choice of an egalitarian or an unegalitarian solution. The decision as to what is just is thus not obvious. This said, the prevalence of internal criteria is more marked on the bottom of the social scale than on the top. Egalitarian solutions are much more frequent: 55% of the choices versus 32% (RN 1). In this way, the family defines itself, here more than elsewhere, as a counter-model of western industrial society. It seeks to define its own rationality, partly by opposing external influences.

This result must be contrasted with the finding that autonomous families - more frequently found at the top of the social scale - use external criteria comparatively more frequently. Here the decision-makers turn the familial debate about justice into a more general negotiation about the relationship between the individual and the outside environment. Thus they have a certain tendency to refer to criteria generally used in the society in which they are living. Differently, fusional-open families are more preoccupied by cohesion, and cohesion forms the basis for the justice decision. Egalitarian choices are respectively 38% (autonomous families) and 53% (fusional open families)(RN 3). Contrary to our hypotheses, the situation is not the same in fusional closed families. These families do not use internal criteria (35% egalitarian choices) than do autonomous families. They are, in fact, "porous" to environmental rules. Is this because external rules provide a clear and sturdy solution to families which are often of the normative type? If we took this

argument to extremes we could venture that fusional closed families are concerned with regulation, while fusional open families are concerned with cohesion, and autonomous families with external integration.

5. Procedural justice versus material justice

In all groups, all families, the members must occasionally choose between a procedural definition of equity (an allocation which has been obtained according to a "good" process of decision between the parties is just, no matter what the result) and a material definition (an equitable allocation is just, whatever the manner in which it has been decided). This thus represents a second "generic problem" in distributive justice. In which groups is procedural justice comparatively more important than material justice? The "Little Bouquets" scenario, oriented toward material justice, does not answer this question. The "Inheritance" scenario, on the other hand, puts these two types of justice in opposition. In phase 2 of this scenario the spouses are in effect required to choose between imposing their own solution of equity (against the opinion of the children), or accepting the solution elaborated by the persons concerned. Acceptance the latter thus indicates the primacy of procedural over material justice.

The results clearly show that "lower middle class" families do not differ from "professional" families on this point: procedural justice is chosen by 30% of the families in both milieux. Style of interaction, however, plays a clear role. In autonomous families, procedural justice is chosen in 40% of the cases, while this proportion is only 20% in fusional closed families. Fusional open families occupy an intermediate position (RN 5). Similarly, normative adaptation families less often choose procedural justice (22%) than do autonomous families with communicational adaptation (39%)(RN 5).

Cohesion by autonomy is thus associated with more importance accorded procedural justice as a mode of resolution of problems of equity.

6. Norms of comparison

The principles and criteria of decision defined above apply to persons or ensembles which must be selected by the actors. How do they choose, and do they apply the same rules of comparison to all? We examine this third generic problem on the basis of the "Parents retirement" scenario.

This question essentielly revolves around determining whether those who decide make an ensemble of all "others", whoever they might be, or if, on the contrary, they segment this ensemble, taking into account the outside social categorizations of the individuals concerned. In fact individuals are not socially abstract. They have titles, ranks, family names, in other words a social identity. Do decision-makers take this social identity into account in defining the persons to compare and/or in applying different rules of evaluation (intraclass) to diverse categories? It is useful to distinguish here between the problem of the principle of inclusion, which defines how the members of a class (in the formal sense of the word) enter or do not enter

into question for the comparison, and the question of the criteria of comparison used for defining the rights and the duties of the members of a class.

In the "Parents retirement" scenario, the decision-makers use a categorial or an individual principle of inclusion to resolve their problems of comparison. The inclusion principle is categorial when all of the members of the "class" are systematically taken into consideration simply because of their appurtenance. It is individual when certain members are selected and others not.

A first important result is that, for family relationships, the procedure of inclusion varies directly with the class of family relationship under consideration. For brothers and sisters it is most often categorial: 81% of the 333 choice procedures. For uncles and aunts it is always individual. This finding would seem to raise a critical point for the comprehension of justice debates: social identity orients the way in which debts or credits are perceived, before the intervention of any other type of evaluation.

This said, within the class of brothers and sisters, which are the families in which the categoriel principle is the most systematically used? These are clearly the fusional closed families: 93% of the procedures of inclusion are categorial in these families. This proportion drops to 63% in autonomous families, who thus leave more space for an individual procedure. Fusional open families occupy an intermediate position with 70% relying on categorial procedures (RN 3).

Once the terms of comparison are established, criteria must be applied to them. How should members of a class be compared to one another? Actors use two different techniques: a statutary technique in which each member of the class must contribute an identical amount, and an evaluative technique. In the former, the debt is divided by the total number of potential contributors regardless of their possibilities. In the latter, on the contrary, actors differentiate fair contributions according to the characteristics of the person.

Our results show that choice of statutary or evaluative techniques is a function of the class of family relationship: statutary choices are much more frequently employed for brothers and sisters (55% of 341 decisions), than for uncles and aunts, who are always evaluated individually. Thus, for the same debt, the criterium of comparison of potentiel debtors varies according to class.

Next, the use of status is more or less marked according to the type of family. On one hand, "lower middle class" families use statutary techniques slightly more than do "professional" families (62% vs. 50%)(RN 1). Appurtenance is more important than the examination of merits. Decision-makers look first at the "significance" of the equality of family relationship status rather than defining a fair contribution. On the other hand, and especially, when type of family interaction is taken into account, fusional normative families are clearly more statutary (67%) than the others (fusional communicational families, 43%; and autonomous families, 53%)(RN 4). This is perhaps because the

statutary rule, as well as affirming the primacy of family over other appurtenances, is very clear: there is neither calculation, always questionable, to be done, nor conflict in the matter. When interpreted this way, a certain ritualism can be discerned in this solution.

The comparison strategy thus does not make a unified whole of the ensemble of potential actors, to which constant norms should be applied. On the contrary; actors segment relatives into several sub-groups, and try at best to aim for egality of treatment only within the frontiers of the class. Such segmentation considerably simplifies the justice decision since it substitutes socially acceptable frontiers to negotiation, often difficult, of respective merits.

7. The nature of the resources

The perspective adopted until now implicitely assumes that only one kind of resources is exchanged. This gives the justice debate a "monotonous" image: it is implied that actors form a sort of unique mass of all resources and all costs, and that they divide this mass this according to a constant criterium. In actual practice, different sorts of resources have social identities, which can affect their mode of allocation. The question of stability or of variation in allocation norms according to the identity of the resource constitutes a fourth generic problem in distributive justice.

The social identity of resources can be typified on two axes according to possible impact on modalities of distributive justice. First, the "identification" axis separates resources which are of value because of the personality of the producer from those which do not have such an identification. While exchanges exterior to the group are generally independant of the personality of the producer, a whole segment of family production is very much involved with this factor. Either one esteems that only one particular category of actors (for example women, or mothers, etc.) can give an optimal quality to the resource, (categorial identification), or one esteems that only one particular person can create the value, (personal identification). The second axis separates resources which have a direct symbolic function for the group from those which do not. Some resources express collective memory, the relationship network, the statuses of group members, and so forth. Resources often have this function when they are produced within the the group rather than outside it. When seen this way, the exchange is thus materially dominated or symbolically dominated.

How is this double categorization reflected in justice decisions? Is identification correlated with mode of allocation? And in which type of family is such a correlation the most likely to be found? We can answer part of this question with the "Grandfather" scenario. Respondants use three major procedures of allocation in resolving this scenario: the evaluative procedure aims at defining which actor can produce the most value for the least cost; thus a norm of rationality is used as a criterium of decision. Differently, the affinity procedure defines the impact of the identity of the producer on the satisfaction of the recipient, and makes this the

criterium for the allocation of the charge. Finally, the management procedure tends to assimilate the resource in question with another category of resources, the mode of allocation of which has already been determined. The spouse who already "manages" the resources judged analogous will thus be given the task of handling the supplement.

What are the results to which these distinctions bring us? Family members most often exchange categorically identified resources (housework and administration, for example) with a management procedure: for the "housework" task 58% of the decisions are of this type, as well as 42% for the "administrative" task (RN 7). The affinity perspective dominates, on the contrary, when the task concerns resources with a personal identification: 49% of the decisions for the "keeping company" task, for example, use this perspective (RN 7). This finding demonstrates that family members do not, indeed, constitute a single mass of the resources in question. Instead, they segment the problem into several sub-groups, applying a specific justice principle to each: sometimes evaluation, sometimes need, sometimes appurtenance. The problem thus becomes less complex, and the solutions retained have greater subjective legitimacy: one applies a norm of allocation to that which might otherwise be negotiated between persons. In this strategy the search for an equilibrium of fairness becomes ritual rather than real: the actors find formal indicators of equity (for example "we do the same number of jobs", "we do half-half", etc.) which replace petty measurements and calculations. This gain in simplicity is obviously paid for with less adaptability: with this strategy it is not possible to divide the resource or the expense into fractions to adjust it to the balance of merits. This process is thus avoidance of apparant inequity rather than a search for an absolute equity. When the process is seen from this perspective, we can hypothesize that satisfaction comes less from the result (more of less correct) than from the sentiment that the actors have or have not done their best to approach justice.

This said, in which family contexts do variations in modes of allocation according to the kind of identification of the resource play the largest role? This can be seen by determining in which families the management procedure is most often used.

The management procedure, in which actors divide areas of action once and for all according to predetermined roles or statuses and charge the person who holds that role or status in consequence, is found markedly more frequently at the lower end of the social scale. The majority of the 5 tasks are divided in this way in 60% of the "lower middle class" families, whereas this predominance is found in only 19% of the "professional" families (RN 1). At the upper end of the social scale spouses decide comparatively much more frequently by evaluation or by affinity. Similarly, the management procedure dominates much less in autonomous families (25%) than in fusional closed families (55%)(RN 3). It also dominates more in fusional normative families than in communicational types of families: 61% vs. 30% (RN 4).

This is to say that in fusional normative families there is less negotiation about what is equitable. Norms seem to be given from the outside, and there is thus greater initial consensus about the allocation of tasks. Initial consensus is especially

noticable in "lower middle class" families: 44% vs. 17% (RN 1), as well as in normative adaptation as opposed to communicational adaptation families: 57% vs. 37% (RN 4).

The management process is thus a source of consensus, but consensus does not mean that satisfaction is necessarily greater. If spouses find at the end of the repartition that they have done their best, they do not always consider the solution retained as being equitable. The solution was found fair by 67% of the "professional" families, but by only 49% of the "lower middle class" families (RN 1). Similarly, a positive judgement was made by 41% of the normative families, versus 65% of the autonomous families. Thus initial consensus and satisfaction do not correspond. If autonomous families took longer to find a solution, they also judged the result attained more positively.

The place resources occupy on the second axis of typology, that of their symbolic function for the group, also plays an important role. Let us see why:

First, the choice of a principle of justice (coupling or not coupling merits with retributions) varies according to this symbolic dimension. If resources produced outside the group (eg. salaries) seem, in numerous cases, to be susceptible to exchange in a way which would compensate for socioeconomic inequalities among family members, the situation is not the same for resources, such as an inheritance, which symbolize the group, its history, its relations. Examination of the "Inheritance" scenario shows, in effect, that no family proposes dividing the inheritance according to the economic status of the children, whereas in the "Little Bouquets" scenario a salary plays this role of compensation in almost half of the cases. Thus certain resources symbolically manifest the equality of family membership for all, and must therefore be divided in equal portions.

A second, and more important, finding is that of the correlation between the symbolic dimension of the resource and the slight importance accorded procedural justice. In resolving the "Inheritance" scenario spouses employ one of the three following types of argumentation. Assimilation assumes that the inheritance is above all a sign of family relationship and that this must determine the repartition. Evaluation compares the ensemble of the resources and costs of the actors, and decides in consequence the equitable repartition in the sense of an equalization of situations. Finalization looks for the possible consequences of a given repartition on family relations, and adapts the choice to these anticipated consequences. The three principles of justice already discussed in relation with the resolution of "Little Bouquets" and "Grandfather" can of course be recognized here. But what is important is that when actors use a dominant argumentation of the "assimilation" type in phase 1 of the "Inheritance" scenario, they refuse fairly systematically in phase 2 to consider the will of the children as being valid. Thus, when the dominant argumentation is founded on the idea that an inheritance is a symbol, the choice of the children, which goes in the opposite direction, is respected in only 16% of the cases, compared with 48% when the dominant argumentation is evaluation (RN 8). It is as though a symbolic resource must not be exchanged in accordance with free agreement of the parties, but requires a supraindividual criterium of

allocation. This is thus a considerable limitation to the importance given procedural justice.

A third way in which the symbolic value of the resource affects its style of allocation comes from the correlation between this value and the principle of inclusion judged legitimate for the comparison of the actors. We see this with the aid of the "Special Price" scenario. Here, the procedure of comparison of brothers and sisters is more often of the categorial type (vs. the individual type) for the wife's relatives than for the husband's: 70% vs. 56% (RN 9). This occurs in spite of the fact that the house had been bequeathed to both husband and wife. The house has symbolic value for the wife's family, however, and thus the decision-makers stress the categorial principle. Everyone is on the same footing, whatever their respective merits. When this symbolic value is absent, the comparison becomes individual and evaluative. We note, in addition, that this "lateralization" of the procedure is more marked on the lower end of the social hierarchy than on the upper end. 70% of the "lower middle class" families change the principle according to the side, versus only half of the "professional" families (RN 1).

8. Forms of appropriation

All of the above analyses are based on the idea that the actors and/or the decision-makers have "private" resources they engage in exchange. The question of the frontiers between the rights of the group versus those of the members over the resources available is artificially eliminated. This simplification is somewhat abusive, however, and as a fifth, and final, generic problem, we evoke the way in which the actors perceive "private" property, the way in which they mark the frontiers between the individual and the collectivity.

Two instruments were used to try to define these types of frontiers. In in-depth interviews we: a) traced the history of the couple's salaries in order to know how the resources of the group were constituted from individual contributions, and b) determined the way in which the spouses finance "personal" or "private" purchases considered to be expensive. In other words we tried to define forms of collective and individual appropriation, or the way in which the diverse members of the group mobilise latent resources for the satisfaction of their specific needs.

How does the individual mobilize resources for personal use? Three principal forms falling around two axes are revealed when acts of appropriation (for "personal" purchases considered expensive) are examined: the first axis is that of the decision-making process (individual or collective) and the second, legitimation of the decision (based on the origin of the resource or on the allocation forseen for it). In sovereinty rights the person mobilizes the resource without referring to the spouse, and legitimizes his or her action by the origin of the resource: salary earned, an inheritance, etc. In restricted rights the procedure is the same (one decides without referring to the spouse), but the legitimation is different: subjective rights are based on the allocation forseen for the resource. Needs regarded as reasonable are recognized, but rights are not linked to the

origin of the resources. Conditional rights are based on previous negotiation of the forseen expense with the spouse. It is thus always legitimated by allocation.

These types of appropriation are dependant on level of resources and type of family interaction. Sovereinty rights appear comparatively more often in "professional" families than in "lower middle class" families: 36% versus 16% of the acts of appropriation (RN 10). This means that external property rights are at least partly conserved within the group. Similarly, we note that the maximum level of intrusion of the group, as shown by conditional rights, is much more frequently attained in "lower middle class" families: 63% versus 38% (RN 1).

As for types of interaction, it seems that sovereinty and restricted rights are markedly more frequent in autonomous families (70%) than in fusional normative families (48%) (RN 11). Similarly, the level of intrusion of the group is much more frequently at its maximum in fusional closed and in fusional normative families than in the others: conditional rights dominate in 64% of the normative families versus only 38% of the autonomous families (RN 4).

These forms of individual appropriation are not necessarily symetrical: the two spouses can use different procedures. Our results clearly show that symetry is markedly more pronounced in autonomous than in fusional families.

Collective appropriation, in reciprocity with individual appropriation, takes three principal forms. It is formal when the group has rights over all resources and when the traces of the original contributors are effaced. It is substantial when, on the contrary, the group has rights to only a definable portion of the resources, and when the individual conserves the mark of his or her production. It is quasi-formal when the group has access to the ensemble of the resources, but when the trace of the producer is conserved (actors know from whence the resource, concretized in a purchase or in an investment, comes). Do these forms of collective appropriation depend on family type?

When the level of resources is high, substantial appropriation is more frequent: 28% in "professional" families versus 11% in "lower middle class" families (RN 1). In the "professional" families studied here, the group thus has a more limited place, and rights are more defined by the individual than in other families. In "lower middle class" families we tend to find the opposite hierarchy: the group fixes the territory of the individual, and when appropriate, cedes rights to a member. It is also, understandably, in autonomous families that substantial appropriation is most frequently found: 41% versus only 8% in fusional closed families (RN 3).

9. Conclusions

At the end of this exploration of various forms of justice norms within the family, our findings and interpretations would seem to lead to the following judgement and hypothesis. The saliency of the need for justice is clearer in "professional" and in autonomous families than in "lower middle class" and in fusional

families. This is because emphasis is placed, among the former, on individual characteristics, and because status is accorded less importance as a determinant of rights and duties. We can thus advance the hypothesis that, according to the high or low degree of saliency, a judgement made as to the equitable or unequitable nature of a given situation will be guided by two different regulators rather than by one. A first regulator is the comparison of the contributions/retributions equilibrium for members of the group. This regulator is privileged when there is marked individuation of resources, a certain similarity in actors' roles, and a preference for evaluative procedures of decision-making. A second regulator is the degree of adequation between the expectations of the subject and the rewards actually obtained, independently of any comparison with another family member. This regulator seems to operate particularly when individuation is limited, when productive roles are highly differentiated, and when there is pronounced emphasis on the "management" procedure. In this latter case, when contributions are qualitativey very diverse, and when appropriation is founded less on origin than on need, the feeling that a situation is just seems to depend on the extent to which these subjective needs (modulated of course by images of marriage and of the family in the milieu considered) are satisfied, rather than on the more difficult equalization of merits. The disparity between aspirations and realizations seems in this case to be evaluated in comparison with persons outside the group, but occupying identical roles in other families. This is for the moment, however, only hypothesis.

ANNEX: REFERENCE NUMBERS (RN)

	N =
Socioeconomic Status	
1. "Lower middle class" (workers and subordinate employees)	38
"Professional" (middle- and upper-level employees, professionals)	59
2. Household revenue:	
less than 5500 Swiss francs	27
more than 7000 Swiss francs	26
Type of family interaction (except for Inheritance and Special Price scenarios)	
3. Autonomous open families	36
Fusional open families	44
Fusional closed families	27
4. Autonomous communicational families	36
Fusional communicational families	41
Fusional normative families	30
5. For the Inheritance and Special Price scenarios (constructed after the first 25 interviews)	
Autonomous open families	28
Fusional open families	34
Fusional closed families	20
Autonomous communicational families	28
Fusional communicational families	31
Fusional normative families	23
"Lower middle class" marriages	28
"Professional" marriages	44
6. Number of brothers and sisters concerned	203
Number of aunts and uncles concerned	105
7. Number of decisions (of husband and wife concerning both fathers)	
Administrative tasks	291
Keeping company	324
Personal hygiene	324
Accompany on visits	287
Housework	271
8. Number of "Assimilation" cases	32
Number of "Evaluation" cases	35
9. Number of wife's brothers & sisters	61
Number of husband's brothers & sisters	39
10. Number of appropriation acts:	
- in "professional" families	107
- in "lower middle class" families	106
11. Number of appropriation acts:	
- in autonomous families	80
- in fusional normative families	84

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